

Frequently-Asked FLAS Questions

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD PROCEDURES:

Q1. Who is eligible to receive a FLAS fellowship?

Graduate students who are US citizens or nationals or permanent residents and who are enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in a program that combines modern foreign language training with international or area studies or with the international aspects of professional or other fields of study.

Q2. Can we award a FLAS to an undergraduate student?

No. The program law specifies that only graduate students are eligible to receive FLAS fellowships.

Q3. Can we award a summer FLAS to a student who graduated in the spring?

Possibly. Although the program regulations specify that students must be “enrolled or accepted for enrollment,” you might be able to arrange with your registrar to retain the student in an “enrolled” status until the end of the summer. Call your FLAS program officer to discuss this situation.

Q4. Can we award a FLAS fellowship to a student from another institution?

Yes, as long as the student and his/her language program meet the FLAS program eligibility requirements.

FLAS REQUIREMENTS AND USES OF AWARDS:

Q5. For what time period is a FLAS awarded?

A FLAS can be awarded for either an academic year or a summer.

Q6. What are the requirements for using a FLAS award?

FLAS fellowships are awarded for:

- (1) a formal domestic or overseas academic program of full-time study during the academic year,
- (2) dissertation research abroad during the academic year, or
- (3) a formal program of intensive language study during the summer.

Only students who are at the advanced level of language proficiency can be approved to use a FLAS for *dissertation research*. The use of language in dissertation research must be extensive enough to consider the foreign language improvement facilitated by the research equal to the improvement that would be obtained from a full academic year's worth of formal classroom instruction.

Students wishing to use an award for a formal *study abroad program* must be at the intermediate or advanced level of language proficiency, or at the beginning level if an appropriate beginning language program in the student's language is not available in the United States.

Q7. What are the course requirements for academic year FLAS fellows?

A FLAS recipient must be a full-time student as defined by grantee institution. The academic year FLAS award must provide the fellow with the equivalent of a full academic year's worth of formal language training. Academic year FLAS fellows who are not approved for overseas dissertation research must be enrolled in both language and area or international studies courses. This is why FLAS fellows are asked to list their entire course load during the award period on the Student Performance Report. Academic year FLAS fellows conducting dissertation research must be extensively using foreign language sources at the advanced level in order to be considered to fulfill the language requirement.

Q8. Can a FLAS award be used to participate in an internship program?

Generally not, because an internship program isn't a formal academic program of full-time study nor dissertation research. Contact your FLAS program officer about a specific internship if you feel it meets the full-time study requirement.

9Q. Is a FLAS fellow allowed to work during the fellowship award period?

FLAS fellows are allowed to work during the award period but can not be required to work in exchange for the FLAS fellowship. Regardless of work status, all FLAS fellows are required to be engaged in full-time foreign language and area or international studies course work or dissertation research during the academic year, or in intensive language study during the summer award period.

SELECTING FELLOWS AND MAKING AWARDS:

Q10. What procedures do we follow when selecting FLAS fellows?

Follow the procedures outlined in your original application for FLAS funding. Any deviations from these procedures should be discussed with your FLAS program officer.

Q11. Can we make single semester/quarter awards during the academic year?

Generally, no. A FLAS award period is either a full academic year or a summer. However, there are three potential situations that might allow a grantee to make a single semester or quarter award:

- (1) A FLAS fellow forfeits his/her grant during the award period, thereby making monies available for a subsequent semester or quarter, or*
- (2) A FLAS fellow graduates in December and therefore is unable to use the award during the rest of the academic year, or*
- (3) A FLAS fellow receives funding from another source for one of the two semesters and the amount is at least the monetary equivalent of a FLAS.*

In all three cases, the grantee must provide the other "half award" to an additional student during the second semester to avoid leaving a student without funding for the latter part of the academic year. A preferable alternative use of funds would be to support additional summer fellowships. Any of the above 3 situations should be explained in the Notes Section of the FLAS Institutional List.

Q12. Can a student receive both a FLAS and another fellowship during the same award period?

Yes. Program regulations do not prohibit a student from receiving another fellowship during the FLAS award period. Cost-sharing with other funding sources is possible under the FLAS program, as long as "double-dipping" is avoided. For instance, the FLAS award should not pay an institutional payment if the other funding source covers the student's tuition and fees. It is also possible for the student to receive subsistence monies in excess of the FLAS student subsistence allowance if the excess is paid from another source. However, we encourage grantees not to award a FLAS to a student who is receiving sufficient support from an alternative funding source because this is not the best use of scarce FLAS monies.

Q13. Can a student begin an academic year award in the spring and continue using the same award to study through the summer and fall?

No, for two reasons:

- (1) there are two discrete FLAS award periods per year, the academic year and summer;*
- (2) the budget period for FLAS fellowships ends August 31 and FLAS carry-overs are not allowed.*

A student who is unable to use a FLAS academic year award during the academic year forfeits his/her award to the next highest-ranked applicant who is able to use the award.

Q14. Can an academic year FLAS fellow take a semester or quarter off and finish work for the award period during the summer or following academic year?

No. Students who do not fulfill the requirements of the FLAS during the original award period forfeit their awards.

Q15. What are the priorities for making FLAS awards to students?

Grantees should adhere to any priorities listed in their applications in response to the “FLAS Awardee Selection Procedures” evaluation criterion.

The purpose of the FLAS program is to ensure continued national competence in foreign languages and area and international studies expertise. Because the national competence in the more-commonly-taught languages is not immediately threatened, the preference for awarding FLAS fellowships should continue to be for the less-commonly-taught languages. Furthermore, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires the US Department of Education to justify continued program funding based on outcomes. For these reasons, program staff strongly encourage grantees to consider the following recommendations in selecting FLAS fellows:

(1) *Make fellowship awards to students in a variety of humanities and social science disciplines, as well as professional fields.*

(2) *Assign lowest consideration in the selection of fellows to:*

- *students who already possess language fluency equivalent to educated native speakers in the language for which the award is sought, including dissertators; and*
- *students who are taking the first 12 semester hours or the equivalent in Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish.*

Q16. Can we give FLAS awards to the same student for multiple award periods?

It is expected that grantees conduct open, merit-based competitions to select fellows for each award period. If a student competes successfully in each discrete competition, then he or she may receive fellowships for multiple award periods.

Q17. Is there a limit on the number of FLAS awards a single student can receive?

The FLAS program law and regulations do not limit the number of FLAS awards a student may receive. Grantees have the discretion to set their own limits. However, a student may not receive more than one fellowship per Academic Year or Summer.

Q18. Can we make FLAS awards in Latin, Sanskrit, Greek, Classical Chinese, Old Church Slavonic or other ancient languages?

Usually not. FLAS fellowships are to support the study of modern foreign languages. Contact your program officer for a ruling on the specific request.

Q19. Can we set our own FLAS rules and requirements that are beyond the legislation and regulations?

Yes, as long as the rules you set do not conflict with the statute, federal regulations, or the selection procedures you outlined in your application narrative.

IEGPS APPROVALS:

Q20. When do we need to obtain prior approval from the program office for FLAS awards?

Prior approval from the FLAS program staff is required for all FLAS awards to be used abroad. Please refer to the “*Requesting FLAS Approval*” table for details regarding the specific information required. Program office approval is also required for all domestic dissertation research/writing awards, since program officers need to ensure that dissertation FLAS fellows will improve their language skills to the same extent as if they were enrolled in a full year of formal language training.

Q21. When do we need to submit requests for overseas study or research abroad approvals?

Approval requests should be submitted at least 30 days prior to the departure of the traveler. Overseas program requests submitted after this deadline might not be approved, in which case they can not be supported with FLAS funds. Travelers should be advised not to make irrevocable travel arrangements (such as airline reservations) prior to receiving the official approval of FLAS program staff.

Q22. *What are the guidelines for determining whether a summer language program is "intensive?"*

The program office rule-of-thumb for "intensive" language programs is a minimum of 100-120 contact hours of instruction, depending on the level and language of study. Students at the beginning and intermediate levels are expected to attend programs offering a minimum of 120 contact hours, while advanced students may attend programs with fewer hours (but not less than 100). The summer FLAS award should provide each fellow with the equivalent of a full academic year's worth of language instruction, so students should be strongly encouraged to attend a program that is a minimum of 5 weeks in length.

Q23. *How can I determine whether the student has chosen a quality language program?*

Check with language faculty on campus to see whether anyone is familiar with the program. Call your FLAS program officer to find out whether the program has been approved in the past for summer FLAS and whether former students' comments on the quality of instruction are positive or negative. Consult with other FLAS programs in your world area.

MONEY ISSUES:

Q24. *Can we use extra institutional payment monies from tuition/fee rates under \$10,000 to supplement tuition/fee rates over \$10,000?*

No. For institutions with tuition and fee rates greater than \$10,000, the difference between the actual rate and the \$10,000 fixed institutional payment must be waived or paid from non-Title VI funds. FLAS funds resulting from tuition rates that are lower than the \$10,000 institutional payment can not be used to supplement institutional payment monies for tuition rates higher than \$10,000.

Q25. *Our tuition rate is low. Can we use extra institutional payment monies to buy books for the FLAS fellows, to supplement their subsistence allowances, or to fund other program activities?*

No. The regulations require that any institutional payment monies in excess of actual tuition and fee costs be used to fund additional fellowship awards to the extent that enough money is available to pay a full subsistence allowance. If the excess amount is less than a full summer subsistence allowance (\$2,400), then extra monies can be used to provide travel awards to summer FLAS recipients or can be pooled with other FLAS programs to create one full award. Travel awards can not exceed \$1,000 or the actual cost of travel, whichever is less.

Q26. *Can we pool any leftover FLAS monies with other institutions to create an additional FLAS award?*

Yes. This option arises most frequently for summer FLAS awards. The other option for using leftover FLAS monies is to make travel awards (not to exceed \$1,000, the amount designated in the application notice) to summer FLAS candidates traveling to off-campus language programs. You are also free to use excess funds to pay travel awards to other FLAS grantees' summer FLAS fellows. The other FLAS grantees do not necessarily need to be in your world area.

Q27. *Can we pay a summer FLAS recipient's tuition but not subsistence allowance?*

Not unless the student will receive an equivalent or higher subsistence allowance from another source for the same award period. A summer FLAS award must consist of full tuition, plus any required fees, *and* the student subsistence allowance. Cost-sharing with another organization to create a full award is allowable, but the student must not be expected to share the cost or to work as a research or teaching assistant in exchange for the FLAS fellowship.

Q28. *If a summer FLAS recipient wants to attend a program with tuition and fees that are higher than the summer FLAS institutional payment, can we expect the student to cover the additional tuition cost?*

No. If the institutional payment for summer awards is not sufficient to cover the cost of full tuition and fees for the language program, the grantee institution must find supplemental funding or arrange a tuition break with the program to ensure that the student is not bearing any of the program costs. If the institution is unable to arrange supplemental funding, the student should be advised to select an alternative language program that does not exceed the institutional payment.

Q29. *We have more FLAS money available than viable candidates for summer FLAS awards. What should we do?*

There are several options:

- (1) Coordinate with other FLAS programs in your world area to make summer FLAS awards to eligible candidates from other institutions.
- (2) Coordinate with other FLAS programs in other world areas to make summer FLAS awards to their eligible candidates.
- (3) Make travel awards to the eligible candidates in conjunction with their summer FLAS awards.

Please note that these situations indicate that the center has either requested more fellowship money than its program needs or has inadequately advertised the FLAS program to all potential candidates. Every effort should be made to ensure that fellowship monies are spent during the specified budget period.

Q30. *If a summer program's fee includes cost of room and board, do we pay the student the \$2,400 subsistence allowance as well?*

No. The subsistence allowance is meant to pay personal expenses including room and board. If these costs are already included in the tuition/fee payment, you should not pay the student for the same costs. Ask the program for an exact breakout of what the program fee covers and subtract the cost of room and board from the student's subsistence allowance. Pay the student the remainder of the subsistence allowance, if any, to ensure the student receives a full award. If the program charge for room and board exceeds \$2,400, the student is expected to pay the remainder of the charge.

Q31. *Can we use excess FLAS monies to support NRC activities?*

No. FLAS monies can only be used to support FLAS fellowships.

Q32. *Can we supplement our FLAS funds with NRC grant monies?*

No. The authorized purposes and funding of the two programs prohibit this.

TRAVEL AWARDS:

Q33. *Can we give travel awards in conjunction with academic year FLAS awards?*

No. The application notice specifies that travel awards can be given only in conjunction with summer FLAS fellowships.

Q34. *Can we give travel awards to students who do not have summer FLAS fellowships?*

No. Travel awards can only be made to defray the summer FLAS recipient's costs of traveling to and from the program site.

Q35. *Are we required to give each summer award recipient a travel award?*

No. Travel awards are not required components of FLAS awards. They represent an optional method of distributing extra monies that result from tuition rates that are lower than the institutional payment.

Q36. *May we give a summer FLAS recipient a travel award that exceeds the actual cost of travel?*

No. Summer travel awards are limited to \$1,000 or the actual cost of travel to and from the program site, whichever is less.

Q37. *Can we give a summer FLAS recipient money to support research-related travel while the student is abroad?*

No. The purpose of the summer FLAS is to support intensive language study, and travel awards support only the travel from the US to the language program site and back. Summer FLAS awards do not support research.

REPORTING:

Q38. *In addition to the FLAS Institutional Lists and the Student Performance Reports, do we have to complete a narrative annual performance report?*

Yes. The Annual Performance Report is required of all NRC and FLAS grantees. Please see the instructions for the specific reporting requirements of FLAS grantees.

Q39. *Can students who receive FLAS fellowships for consecutive award periods submit a single student performance report covering both award periods?*

No. Students are required to submit a separate student performance report for each award period.

Q40. *How do I collect Student Performance Reports from FLAS fellows who have disappeared?*

Try to track the student down through his/her peers and/or advisor and/or the university alumni office. If you have exhausted all channels and are still unable to obtain the required performance report, send your program officer an official letter of explanation for the file (we give credit for effort!) and consider adopting measures which will ensure better luck next time. For instance, include a statement in the award letter establishing the terms and conditions of the fellowship, link the payment of the fellow's last installment of the subsistence allowance to receipt of the performance report, and/or wait to distribute reports until just before the end of the award period so that students won't lose the form.

Q41. *Should I ask students to mail their reports to US/ED?*

No. Since the grantee is officially responsible for all required reports, we ask that you collect the reports and forward them to your FLAS program officer with the institutional list for the award period.

Q42. *How should the Student Performance Reports be submitted?*

Students submit the Student Performance Reports in sealed envelopes to the FLAS Coordinators in sealed envelopes who then forward the unopened envelopes to US/ED. Student Performance Reports are confidential.

CONTACTING FLAS PROGRAM STAFF:

Q43. *May we refer students with their FLAS questions to the US/ED program officer?*

Please don't. Since grantees are allowed to establish their own program rules in addition to ours, we do not like to be put in the position of potentially contradicting the grantees' program rules and practices. The FLAS Fellowships Program is an institutional grant program; therefore, we request that all communications be relayed to FLAS staff through the grantee's designated project director or FLAS Coordinator.

Q44. *Whom do I contact with questions about FLAS administration?*

Cheryl Gibbs (Asia and Pacific Islands)

phone: 202-401-9785; fax: 202-205-9489; e-mail: cheryl_gibbs@ed.gov

Ed McDermott (Eurasia, Europe, Middle East)

phone: 202-401-9782; fax: 202-205-9489; e-mail: ed_mcdermott@ed.gov

Karla Ver Bryck Block (Africa)

phone: 202-401-9774; fax: 202-205-9489; e-mail: karla_verbryckblock@ed.gov

Amy Wilson (Canada, International, Latin America)

phone: 202-205-9823; fax: 202-205-9489; e-mail: amy_wilson@ed.gov